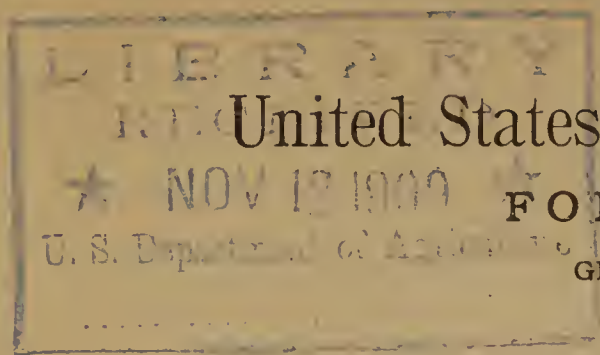


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United States Department of Agriculture,

FOREST SERVICE,

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THE NATIONAL FORESTS OF ARKANSAS.

Arkansas is one of the few States which still have large areas of virgin timber land. The two National Forests in Arkansas—the Ozark with an area of 1,526,481 acres, situated in Crawford, Washington, Franklin, Johnson, Newton, Pope, Van Buren, Conway, Searcy, Marion, Baxter, Stone, and Cleburne counties, and the Arkansas, with an area of 1,663,300 acres, in Sebastian, Scott, Logan, Yell, Perry, Saline, Garland, Montgomery, Pike, Polk, and Howard counties—were created in order that the timber on a part of this area might be conserved. Most of the Western and a few of the Eastern States have National Forests, which, including Alaska, now comprise almost 200,000,000 acres.

The policy of the Government in the administration of the National Forests may be summed up in the expression, "The greatest good to the greatest number." The result is the fullest permanent benefit to all the people for the longest possible time, instead of temporary benefit to a few of them at the future expense of all.

Acts of Congress give to the President the right to create National Forests and to the Secretary of Agriculture the right to prescribe regulations under which they shall be administered. Since many of these regulations are made to fit local conditions, the regulations which apply to the Forests in Arkansas differ from those in effect on the Western Forests, because there is enough difference in conditions to warrant special attention to the needs in Arkansas. But the only changes are those made necessary by local conditions and which the best good of all the people requires.

Since a large part of the land within the Arkansas Forests is patented, the number of stock allowed to graze without charge is much larger than in the Western Forests. People residing in or very near the Forest, who own not more than 25 head of cattle or horses, or an equivalent in hogs or sheep and goats—in the ratio of 2 hogs or 3 sheep or goats for 1 cow or horse—may graze their stock free of charge. A further allowance will be made by Supervisors when the permittee owns unfenced patented land within the Forest. Nonresidents who do not own or lease land within a Forest will be required to pay grazing fees and will not be allowed on the Forest where the range is already fully stocked. The fact that the public range has been used for a number of years does not give the right to such use, for the land itself belongs to all the citizens of the United States and not entirely to those who now happen to live in the neighborhood.

One of the duties of the Forest Service is to protect National Forests from fire. Long experience on the part of private forest owners throughout the South has shown that the range is not benefited by annual or repeated burning. The roots of the grasses are injured and the fertility of the soil is gradually destroyed. Old residents of the Forests in Arkansas state that the range was much better before burning was begun than it is now. Forest fires do a great deal of damage to the timber even though the country is burned over every year and there is little chance for litter to accumulate. Trees are scarred and rot enters; young trees are destroyed, and when the old timber is removed there will be nothing to replace it. As a result of repeated burning a large amount of timber is now defective. Many of the kinds of trees which have been injured are of little value at the present time, but these will become valuable in the future when the supply of those now valuable is exhausted.* Accordingly, the prevention of fires will mean a gain to the people, the counties, and the State, because of the production of greater amounts and a better quality of timber, and it is to the best interest of everyone to do all in his power to assist Forest officers in fire protection.

According to the Bureau of Animal Industry of the United States Department of Agriculture, the Texas fever tick can not be removed from the range by burning, and the practice of burning pastures and wooded areas to exterminate the tick is not advocated by that Bureau. Old residents in the Arkansas Forests state that before the custom of an annual burning of the woods was first started the Forests were much more open than at the present time. Fire increases the number of sprouts and, after it is once begun, continual burning is necessary to keep the woods open. If fires are prevented the woods will be dense for a few years, but will then become more open, as they were in early days. Fall burning destroys the mast necessary for the proper fattening of hogs. Huckleberries, gooseberries, and grapes are destroyed by fire. The Forest Service, in order to prevent fires, has posted fire signs along trails and roads and at public places. Since these signs are for the benefit of the people every effort should be made to prevent their destruction and to observe the instructions they contain.

The creation of the National Forests is in accordance with the wise policy of putting to the highest possible use, in the interest of all the people, the resources of the States and of the Nation. It has accordingly been the purpose to include within Forest boundaries only those lands chiefly valuable for Forest purposes, leaving lands of a different character open to appropriation and development under the laws designed for their proper and best use. In withdrawing large timbered areas for Forest purposes, however, small tracts of agricultural land here and there were unavoidably included. No provision was at first made under which these isolated tracts could be acquired for farming

purposes—their wisest use—but a remedy was soon provided in the act of June 11, 1906, known as the Forest Homestead Act, which permits the settlement and entry of all lands in National Forests found upon examination to be chiefly valuable for agricultural purposes. The proper and best agricultural development of the country has not been and will not be in any manner embarrassed or prevented by the creation of National Forests.

Examiners of land under the Forest Homestead Act can by the law recommend for listing only those lands chiefly valuable for agriculture. In all cases, the value of the land for all agricultural purposes, including fruit growing, is considered by examiners. The inclusion of timber is unnecessary, since the settler may secure from the Forest under a free-use permit all the timber ordinarily required for firewood, fencing, and improvements; thus, all lands chiefly valuable for timber purposes are retained for conservative management and use under the supervision of the Forest Service. But small areas of timber which separate tracts of agricultural land, or which should eventually form a part of the tract applied for, will be listed. The inclusion of land solely valuable for grazing is likewise unnecessary, since residents in and very near the Forest may, after 1909, graze free of charge and without permit 25 cattle or horses, or a proportionate number of hogs and sheep.

Land covered by timber of small growth is not excluded from homestead entry unless it is believed that the land is naturally better adapted to the growth of timber than of agricultural products, and that its future value for timber is greater than for farming.

The Forest Homestead Act (June 11, 1906) is a law made by Congress, which provides that not every Forest homestead shall embrace 160 acres, but that no such homestead shall exceed this area. Consequently, from the very nature of the conditions with which this law deals, as heretofore outlined, it is to be expected that in a great many cases homesteads will be restricted to less than 160 acres. However, should an applicant perfect title to less than 160 acres, under the provisions of the Forest Homestead Act, there is nothing to prevent him, if he is otherwise qualified, from making homestead entry for an amount of land, which, when added to the area included in his first entry, will not exceed a total of 160 acres.

In determining the action upon a homestead application, the Forest Service considers only the character of the land applied for.

Forest officers are directed to assist claimants who have acted in good faith and complied with the law in obtaining patent to their claims. It is not the desire of the Forest Service, nor has it authority, to deprive any person of a homestead to which he is justly entitled. No attempt will be made to take advantage of any technicality that might under the law deprive any person of his homestead when he has acted in good faith and cultivated and improved his land substantially. Upon the

request of the General Land Office, Forest officers report the facts regarding claims within National Forests to the Chief of Field Division of the Land Office, without recommendation of any kind, and the Land Office decides whether or not patent shall be granted. Forest officers, when necessary, act as witnesses. Claims in National Forests, as elsewhere, are never canceled without giving the claimant a chance to apply for a hearing at the Land Office.

The law does not permit a homesteader to cut any timber from his claim before final certificate is issued, unless he intends within a short time to cultivate the land from which the timber is cut or to use the timber for improving his claim. If, however, in order to clear land for cultivation he has cut timber he may, after using a sufficient amount for improvement, sell what is left. After he has final certificate there is nothing to prevent cutting if the claimant has complied with the law in reference to cultivation and improvements. After the land is withdrawn for Forest purposes the law does not allow it to be homesteaded except under the provisions of the Forest Homestead Act (June 11, 1906). The Land Office, therefore, is prohibited by law from allowing entry in the usual way upon land withdrawn for Forest purposes, and if mistakes of this kind are made they must be corrected and all fees refunded.

National Forest lands can not be taxed, but Congress has passed a law which provides that 25 per cent of all the money received from each National Forest during any year shall be paid to the State in which the Forest is situated, to be expended as the State legislature may direct for the benefit of the public schools and public roads of the county or counties in which the Forest is situated. Forest officers do not in any case receive payments for National Forest products, but users themselves send all deposits to a national bank at Albuquerque, New Mexico. All accounts of importance are paid by the District Fiscal Agent at Albuquerque, and not by local officers. Forest officers are paid salaries and receive no fees or special compensations for special work. All salaries paid Forest officers and all expenditures made by them are covered by appropriations of Congress, so that the existence of a Forest can not in any way increase taxes. Neither Forest officers nor the Forest Service itself derive any benefit, directly or indirectly, from money received at the national bank. This money goes into the Treasury of the United States.

In order to provide for better administration of National Forests as rapidly as the funds are available, roads, trails, and telephone lines will be built. In many places where the construction of roads and trails will also be of great advantage to residents, cooperation will be mutually beneficial. By the building of roads, timber on Government lands, as well as on that owned by individuals, will be made more accessible, and therefore of more use. Telephone lines are constructed to provide for

a better administration of the Forests—that is, to give the people better service—and every effort should be made to assist in their maintenance and to prevent their destruction.

During the year beginning July 1, 1909, and ending June 30, 1910, the Government will spend \$21,064 in the administration of the Arkansas National Forest, and \$4,758 in building roads, trails, telephones, and administrative headquarters; and \$16,340 in the administration of the Ozark Forest, and \$4,400 for permanent improvements.

The Forest Service will sell timber which has matured in order to prevent its waste, and also to make way for the growth of new timber. The amount in each case will depend upon the wishes of purchasers and the needs of the community in which it is to be sold, and will be limited only by the capacity of the Forest. The brush from all cuttings will be disposed of in such a way as to cause the least possible danger from fire. When residents in the Forests need green timber for improvements and are not able to purchase and have not a sufficient supply upon their own lands, it may be obtained from Forest officers in reasonable amounts under free use. Dead timber and pine knots, if actually needed for domestic use, may hereafter be taken without permit. Timber so taken may not, however, be sold.

As timber becomes more and more scarce and that which remains, as a result, is more valuable, an increasingly larger number of wood-using industries will be possible, with a corresponding increase in the number of people employed. The plan of putting all land to its best use and managing lands best suited to tree growth, systematically, with the object of growing, for use, the maximum amount of the best kinds of timber, will in the long run result in decided benefit to the people, the counties in which the Forests are situated, and the State. The work in Arkansas and the United States is new, and suggestions intended to improve the methods are welcomed by all Forest officers. Since the whole movement is for the people, it is the privilege and the duty of the people, and to their best interest, to cooperate and assist to the utmost.

Information regarding the work of the Forest Service may be secured through the District Forester at Albuquerque, New Mexico. He will also be glad to send, upon request, Forest Service publications regarding the work. Forest Supervisors and Rangers will also be glad to furnish information and assistance.

People living in the Arkansas Forest, who have complaints to make or who do not understand the regulations, should apply to one of the Rangers or write to the Supervisor at Mena for redress or information; and those living in the Ozark Forest should likewise apply to the Supervisor at Harrison.

